9:Harney & Elkin E-4, 5 (ca. 1940)1943 O120 Tiwi O120

MELVILLE AND BATHURST ISLANDERS: A SHORT DESCRIPTION

By W. E. HARNEY and A. P. ELKIN[1]

133 *Type of Country.* These islands are fairly large, measuring together about 150 miles from east to west and about 50 miles across the widest part. It is flat country composed of lateritic overburden covering a chalky and, in some places, a green stone full of fossils (Ammonites, Belemites, etc.). At one time it was probably connected with the mainland, and the Apsley Strait which separates the two islands was in those days a continuation of the Adelaide River.

137 The timber is mostly stringybark, bloodwood, and fan palm, while along the shores is the usual jungle growth that can be found in these parts. Wallabies and 136 other game are also present, but no porcupine (echidna), native cat or emu. Dingoes 231 are plentiful. This is the reason for the natives having few dogs. The tame dog (*wongine*), while out hunting alone, is often destroyed by these dingoes, *diamini*. 825 According to the natives, the dingoes do this because they are annoyed with the native dogs for taking some of their food. They (the *diamini*) are the rightful owners and the dog is an intruder.

142 *The Natives.* The natives of these islands, all of whom speak one language, are an unusual type. Curly hair predominates, but occasionally we find a straight-304 haired and a curly haired person in the same family. The cicatrices on their bodies are of the palm leaf pattern, though the straight lines of the mainland people may 757 often be seen. They bear numerous small cuts on their foreheads and various parts of the body, caused by the practice of blood-letting as a cure for sickness.

101 *Tribal Name.* The tribal name of these people is an open question. At one time Mr. Harney called them Nimara, their word for language or talk. They have a word, Tunawini, one black man, but this term can embrace people of other tribes; it comes from the words *tiwi*, men (Hart's name for these natives, *Oceania*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 167), *tini*, man, *tiya*, woman. They have, however, a term Worunguwe, which embraces them all—clans, horde places, people—and excludes other tribes such as Iwaidja, Larrakia, etc. The Iwaidja people call the Melville Island natives by that name, and Mr. Harney suggests that we should use it. Hart's term is not really a tribal name for it simply means people. Father McGrath suggests a name

[114] [1] Mr. W. E. Harney is the exceptional layman who understands Aboriginal culture. For a number of years he and I have been collaborating in the study of a number of Aboriginal tribes of the Northern Territory. This article is a brief summary of information gathered by Mr. Harney while engaged in work on Melville and Bathurst Islands. It has been checked, discussed with Mr. Harney, and rewritten by myself. For some parts of this paper readers are advised to refer to the following articles by C. W. M. Hart: "The Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands," *Oceania*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 167-180, and "Personal Names Amongst the Tiwi," *Oceania*, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 80-90.—A. P. ELKIN.

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

lores and customs, and if the white people were disappointed by his performance in settlement work, the old men of the tribe were just as pleased by his attitude to his native heritage.

Agnes, a slim tall girl of twenty, was even shyer than Albert and to cover up this shyness she always smiled or giggled. She was a cheerful soul to have around. Feeling that the responsibility of the care and feeding of the *murandanga* (female white person) was a little more than their young shoulders could bear, Albert asked Big Jack, his older brother, a "big man" in the tribe to come along. At the last minute a fifth member was added, Tchuwiunga, a tiny black-and-white puppy of about eight weeks old.

Number one canoe was the largest canoe and was considered the safest. The Malay fishermen, a century or more ago, had taught the Melville Islanders how to hew a rough canoe from a single log, but the art had never been perfected. This canoe measured about fifteen feet in length by about three feet in width at the center. There were small platforms in the bow and stern which

Fig. 3. Setting off in Number one canoe

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

136
142
291

Fig. 20. Althea and Crissy-boy showing me the large snake which Filicy had killed

123
262 cooked, with that delicious charcoal-broiled flavor so much sought after in our more elite dining establishments or in our backyards.

123
224 Just as we had started our feast the other group arrived and soon had their fire started. Although no overt comparison of each other's catch was made, it was quite obvious that their hunt had been more successful. Besides the half dozen possums and two goanas, they brought over to show us an extremely large water [431] snake about ten or twelve feet long. Shortly, Filicy again came [513] over and presented us with one of their possums. After this tremendous feast, everyone stretched out and went to sleep, rousing only in time to arrive back at Minianapi in time to meet the geese.
123
●231 All the way back in the canoe, Crissy-boy played with two hairless baby possums, creating quite an uproar as he put them in everyone's
484 hair where they clung with their tiny feet. They died before we reached the shore and were thrown into the water. Althea was
123
533

13:Barclay J-3 (ca. 1939)1939 O120 Tiwi O120

797 The sisters frequently take their charges into the bush for a day's "walkabout," and all the children go back to their parents at intervals. Thus their education at the mission does not mean that they lose all the bushcraft that is their natural inheritance.

[23] 241 THEY are busy people at the mission. In addition to the fruits already mentioned, lay brothers grow crops of peanuts and sweet potatoes and attend to the pigs, goats, and cattle that form the live-stock of the settlement. They are their own mechanics and electricians, and the tractor used in the farming operations also charges the six-volt battery which, transformed to 360 volts high tension, is employed in radio communication with the mainland. Boats are built in the workshop by the brothers, and a launch, of 26 feet deck measurement, has been completed and very neatly fitted with bunks, cooking shelf for a primus stove, crockery cupboard, and lockers. When fitted with an engine, this launch will replace the old lugger *St. Francis*, so well known in North Australia, and will afford a more rapid and certain passage to the mainland.

As we walked back to the aerodrome, little black boys drove a long string of white goats through the palm-trees, and the "blackies" waved and called "Um-bung-ie!" (good-bye). Major

[p. 19(A)]